



# Growth Through Culture

## A Public Art and Cultural Activation Toolkit

### Frome Gateway Extract





Wonder Pavilion, Glenfron Primary School, Bristol, 2014  
Image credit, Max McClure

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This document is an extract from **Growth Through Culture – A Public Art and Cultural Activation Toolkit for Bristol City Centre and Frome Gateway**.

This document is specific to Frome Gateway and is designed to provide a digestible summary.

For the full document please visit [www.aprb.co.uk/resources](http://www.aprb.co.uk/resources)

## **Documents available in other formats:**

You can request alternative formats of this document by contacting

[CityCentreRegeneration@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:CityCentreRegeneration@bristol.gov.uk)

**Front cover image**  
Trinity Garden Party 2025.  
Image credit: Elliot Hingston.

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**Help us to transform Bristol's City Centre and Frome Gateway neighbourhoods to be filled with public life and creative activity for everyone. Celebrating what's already here, welcoming communities and visitors of the present and future, nurturing nature, and growing skills and opportunities.**

**Be part of an ambitious, collaborative growth through culture approach bringing together developers, cultural organisations, artists and local stakeholders to deliver creative projects for positive change.**



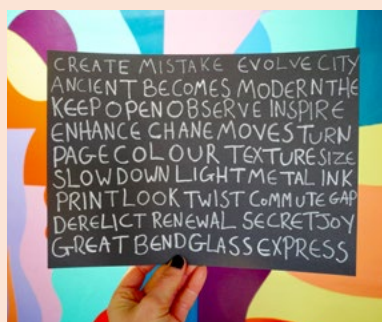
ATSP29, Emma Smith, KHBT, Travelling Light Theatre, Bristol Old Vic Young Company, Wapping Wharf, 2016. Image credit, Camilla Adams

# Executive Summary

**The purpose of this toolkit is to demonstrate how public art and cultural activation will add value to developments across the City Centre and Frome Gateway regeneration areas as part of a joined up approach, and maximise and co-ordinate developer contributions by proposing a ‘menu’ of public art and cultural activation ideas that developers can deliver or contribute to.**



Studio Weave, Sea Mills School, 2013. Image credit, Max McClure.



EQ Building, process image, Molly Hawkins, Bristol, 2023, Image credit, Molly Hawkins.



Theaster Gates, Sanctum, Bristol, 2016. Image credit, Max McClure.

The toolkit includes smaller, quicker to achieve ideas alongside broad brush ambitious concepts with the aim of encouraging wider strategic partnerships and co-investment in the future. It is for an audience which includes developers, strategic partners, and local organisations and entities wanting to initiate and fund raise work with artists and creatives on their own projects.

The toolkit contains a set of ‘project opportunities’ at a variety of levels of investment, including temporary and permanent artworks, artist-led design, creative and cultural happenings, and new creative and community spaces.

**Be part of an ambitious, collaborative approach to deliver growth through culture for positive change.**



This document focusses on two areas, Bristol City Centre, and Frome Gateway.

**Transforming  
Bristol's City  
Centre and  
Frome  
Gateway  
neighbourhoods  
to be filled with  
public life and  
creativity for  
everyone.**

## **What are the toolkit objectives?**

- Set out an approach for public art and cultural activation that addresses the strategic regeneration visions and objectives of the City Centre Development and Delivery Plan (DDP) and Frome Gateway Framework
- Identify area-specific opportunities, connections and synergies through engagement with local and regional stakeholders
- Propose approaches to public art and cultural activation designed to contribute to economic, social and environmental value relevant to the two areas
- Provide guidance to developers regarding public art policy to de-risk and expedite delivery and maximise its impact
- Catalyse collaboration with wider strategic partners and investors with shared values and priorities in culture-led regeneration
- Inspire delivery by a range of different stakeholders and partners
- Deliver growth through culture

# Introduction and Purpose

This toolkit document:

- Outlines the value and opportunity of developer investment and collaboration as a catalyst for wider, long term strategic partnerships and investment in the Bristol City Centre and Frome Gateway areas
- Proposes an ambitious, joined up approach to public art and cultural activations over the next ten years to mitigate the impact of large scale development and accelerate new housing delivery
- Includes artist-led projects which are smaller ‘quick wins’ alongside broad brush ambitious concepts deliverable through longer term co-investment

## About the process

This toolkit document has been made possible through Homes England investment and has been created through a collaborative engagement process with local stakeholders and developers. It builds on and intends to amplify engagement work already undertaken by Bristol City Council and the local community for the [City Centre Development and Delivery Plan](#) (DDP) and [the Frome Gateway Spatial Regeneration Framework](#) (2023)

**“Culture is the heart of placemaking, it is the joy that creates a sense of belonging. In regeneration, a culture driven approach ensures inclusive, vibrant, healthy places where people and nature coexist sustainably.**

**By embedding cultural heritage, local voices and creativity we create spaces that are not only resilient to climate challenges but also equitable, accessible, inspiring and rooted in the communities they serve.”**

**Councillor Ani Townsend**

Co-Chair of the Bristol One City Culture Board

## Who is the toolkit for?

This toolkit is for:

- Developers looking to deliver public art and culture to meet Bristol City Council’s planning policy requirements
- Local entities and groups wanting to initiate and fundraise for their own cultural projects, and connect with regeneration area-wide ambitions
- Strategic partners and investors



Confluence Part One – Public sharing event at the Glassworks in Redcliffe, 2023. Image credit, Paul Blakemore.

# What is Public Art and Cultural Activation?

**Public art and cultural activation create imaginative and meaningful experiences that put culture at the heart of place. It enriches the physical and social fabric of the city.**

Considering creative opportunities early enables an investment in people and sustained engagement alongside high quality urban design, creating successful places to live, work and move through. It also builds relationships between the built environment, public realm and the city's creative sector, employing and engaging thousands of residents and visitors each year.

Public art might traditionally be seen as permanent sculptural works, but a more open approach – encouraging the commissioning of a breadth of projects, tangible and intangible – has the potential to resonate with people and communities and enhance character and identity. Public art and cultural activation in this context includes a diversity of creative practice and cultural experience, including:

- Temporary and permanent artworks
- Artist-led functional design
- Creative and cultural happenings
- New creative and community spaces emerging from the Bristol City Centre Community and Cultural Space Report

In each case:

- The work is site or community specific, with a clear purpose and support from the community
- It engages an artist/s, and invests time and money in creative people and processes
- It is led by a curator/producer to bring expertise and support to the commissioning process
- It benefits from a deep understanding of the physical, social and cultural context of the site
- It encourages collaboration between design teams, delivery areas, service users and communities to achieve accessible and engaging outcomes.

## What do we mean by public art?

Art that is in the public realm, regardless of whether it is situated on public or private property or whether it has been paid for with public or private money. For Bristol City Council our priority is public art that is experienced in public space and accessible to all.

It is underpinned by a belief that public art:

- Is not a particular art form but a way of working which holds place and people at the heart
- Should not be an 'add-on' but considered as early as possible to maximise impact
- Whatever the output it has emerged through an artist/s involvement in the process
- Artists and their creative process have a specific role to play in meaningful place-shaping
- Should align to, and benefit local value and needs and health

## What do we mean by cultural activation?

Activity that contributes to the culture and conviviality of existing and new places. This might include events and happenings, as well as activating spaces for meeting and gathering. Often bringing people together, providing a sense of shared identity and belonging, and empowerment; encouraging participation in civic life. It is underpinned by a belief that cultural activation:

- Can include art and artists to address broader cultural activators such as food and sport.
- Whatever the activation it has emerged through working with creative partners/cultural producers and/or artists, and through engaging with local stakeholders and assets
- Has a specific role to play in building a sense of neighbourhood and social capital
- Should align to and benefit local social value and needs



Morning Meet Up Workshop, Dorcas Casey, Bristol, 2025. Image credit, Ruby Turner



Arch by Kaleider, Mayfest, 2024. Image credit, Paul Blakemore



Undercurrents, Libita Sibungu, Bristol, 2023, Courtesy Bristol City Council



Of Riders and Running Horses by Still House. Image credit, Paul Blakemore



Fog Bridge, Fujko Nakaya, Bristol 2015.



The Orchard, David Thorpe, 2012– 15. Image credit, Max McClure



Dorcas and Octavia Casey, Castle Fine Arts Foundry, 2025. Image credit, Faye Hedges

# From Gateway

- Area Background and Context
- What Have People Said?
- From Gateway Vision
- From Gateway Principles
- Menu of Ideas



Around the World In BS5, Produced by Compass Presents, 2023. Image credit, Lisa Whiting

# Area Background and Context

Frome Gateway is the name BCC has given to its regeneration area in St Jude's between Newfoundland Way, Easton Way, Pennywell Road and Wade Street.

The area is the first point of arrival for many visitors to Bristol City Centre arriving from Newfoundland Way. It lies directly to the north-east of Bristol City Centre and covers an area of approximately 14.5 hectares. Land in this area is generally underused for a central city location, comprising predominantly industrial and service buildings including vacant sites. The mixed-use redevelopment of this area will provide a considerable additional supply of new homes with new forms of workspace while enhancing the accessibility, nature conservation value and recreational potential of Riverside Park and the wider River Frome corridor.

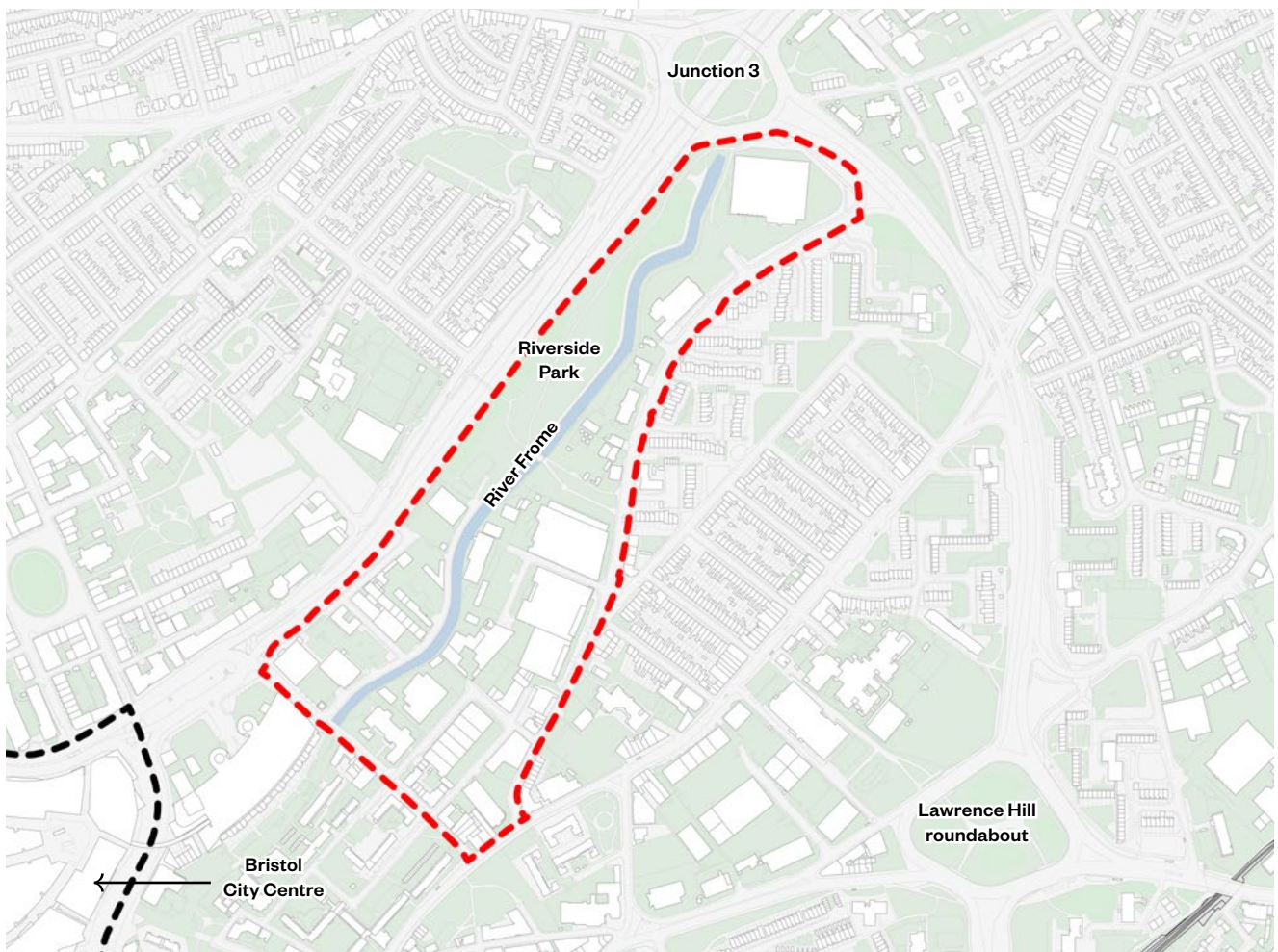
## Relevant Policy and further information



[The Frome Gateway Spatial Regeneration Framework \(2023\)](#) sets out the vision and framework for the regeneration of Frome Gateway.

## Key

 Frome Gateway boundary





The Jam Jar, artwork by Stivs @Stivsart



Wellington Road



Jam on the Horizon. Image credit, Eddy Hubble from '@Hubble\_Photo



Lost Horizon on Clement Street



View of Riverside Park and the River Frome



Wellington Road looking towards Wade Street

## What Have People Said?

**The following pages provides a summary of what people have said during engagement and workshop sessions that informed this toolkit work.**

### **What does the Spatial Regeneration Framework say?**

The Frome Gateway Spatial Regeneration Framework sets out Community Place Principles on page 28. A summary of the engagement work informing these principles can be found on pages 26 and 27.

This records information gathered during extensive conversations with local residents via walkabouts, co-design workshops and door knocking.

**Preserve the grassroots energy, inclusivity and accessibility that define existing spaces in Frome Gateway.**

**We need affordable, soundproofed and versatile spaces**

**Prioritise marginalised voices including LGBTQ+ communities, people of colour and young people**

**Support and resource existing cultural and civic infrastructure rather than building new spaces without considering long-term sustainability**

### **Creating critical mass.**

Building on recent successes and mitigating the impact of lower footfall requires more coordinated activity. People should expect activity to be happening in the area rather than only coming to Frome Gateway for a particular reason or event.

**Reuse and adapt existing heritage buildings**

### **Addressing people's priorities.**

Projects need to reflect what people are challenged with day-to-day to ensure people engage with culture

**Turn abstract principles into direct action**

### **Reaching new audiences.**

Programming can benefit from a broader range of visitors, particularly families, children and the local diverse population.

## Our Vision

**In Frome Gateway, public art and cultural activation needs to be a set of ‘co-created on common ground’ projects that focus on making the area more navigable, legible and convivial, while continuing to celebrate its ‘story of place’.**

**Projects should amplify Frome Gateway as an ‘engine house’ of cultural production, creative and maker spaces, address local social and economic inequalities, and seek to reconnect to the River Frome and make it part of the neighbourhood.**



Our Dream Today, Your Dream Tomorrow, muf, Bristol, 2016. Image credit, Max McClure.

# What should projects in Frome Gateway achieve?

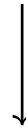
## Guiding Principles

**This page outlines guiding principles that public art and cultural activation projects should follow in Frome Gateway.**

**In the Frome Gateway this means projects can deliver the guiding principles by:**

### A. Social engagement

Creatively engaging, informing and empowering our citizens, communities and stakeholders.



- Co-creating projects on common ground
- Collective learning, openness and sustaining awareness
- Building and sustain long-term relationships between cultural infrastructure, local business and communities
- Involving children, families and the local population
- Lowering barriers to participation
- Helping address the day-to-day priorities of local people

## B. Vibrant Placemaking

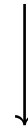
Imagining and contributing to liveable, loved, playful and healthy places to live, work and move through.



- Creating a more navigable, legible and convivial space
- Celebrating Frome Gateway's local distinctiveness and industrial character
- 'Shop window-ing' and celebrate what is happening in Frome Gateway, and make it more public facing
- Supporting inclusive night-time economy uses

## C. Sustainability

Supporting a programme of work that contributes to an environmentally and socially sustainable city.



- Celebrating the river and park as a shared public space
- Food growing and productive landscapes
- Supporting active travel and sustainable transport
- Supporting the creation of permanent dedicated spaces (creative/affordable workspace) which contribute to sustainability of cultural sector
- Aligning with the Resilient River Frome project, enhancing placemaking opportunities

# Frome Gateway Principles

## D. Quality urban design

Embedding quality public art and culture into schemes as early as possible to maximise economic, civic and social value for developers, residents and users.



- Creating a safer area at night
- Ensuring varied, accessible and better play opportunities
- Re-establishing Pennywell Road as a community focused street
- Enhancing Peel Street Open Space
- Supporting the creation of a fully accessible Riverside Promenade
- Testing uses and meanwhile use at Wellington Road site

## E. Cultural ecology

Nurturing Bristol's cultural, creative ecology by commissioning artists and producers and providing space to allow their vision and ideas to thrive



- Platforming local artists and local commissioning
- Celebrating Frome Gateways creatives and makers, and cultural production spaces
- Strengthen existing cultural assets and infrastructure, celebrate natural resources and support residents (new and old) to come together
- Reaching a 'critical mass' and regularity in events and activity



Celebration Event for Home Sweet Home, Kayle Brandon, Bristol, 2021. Image credit, Bricks

# Menu of Ideas

## Small Projects

**The map opposite presents a set of small projects which have the potential to be delivered individually or as a cluster. The delivery of these projects could be funded by smaller grants or funding pots and led by a range of different stakeholders.**

### Key



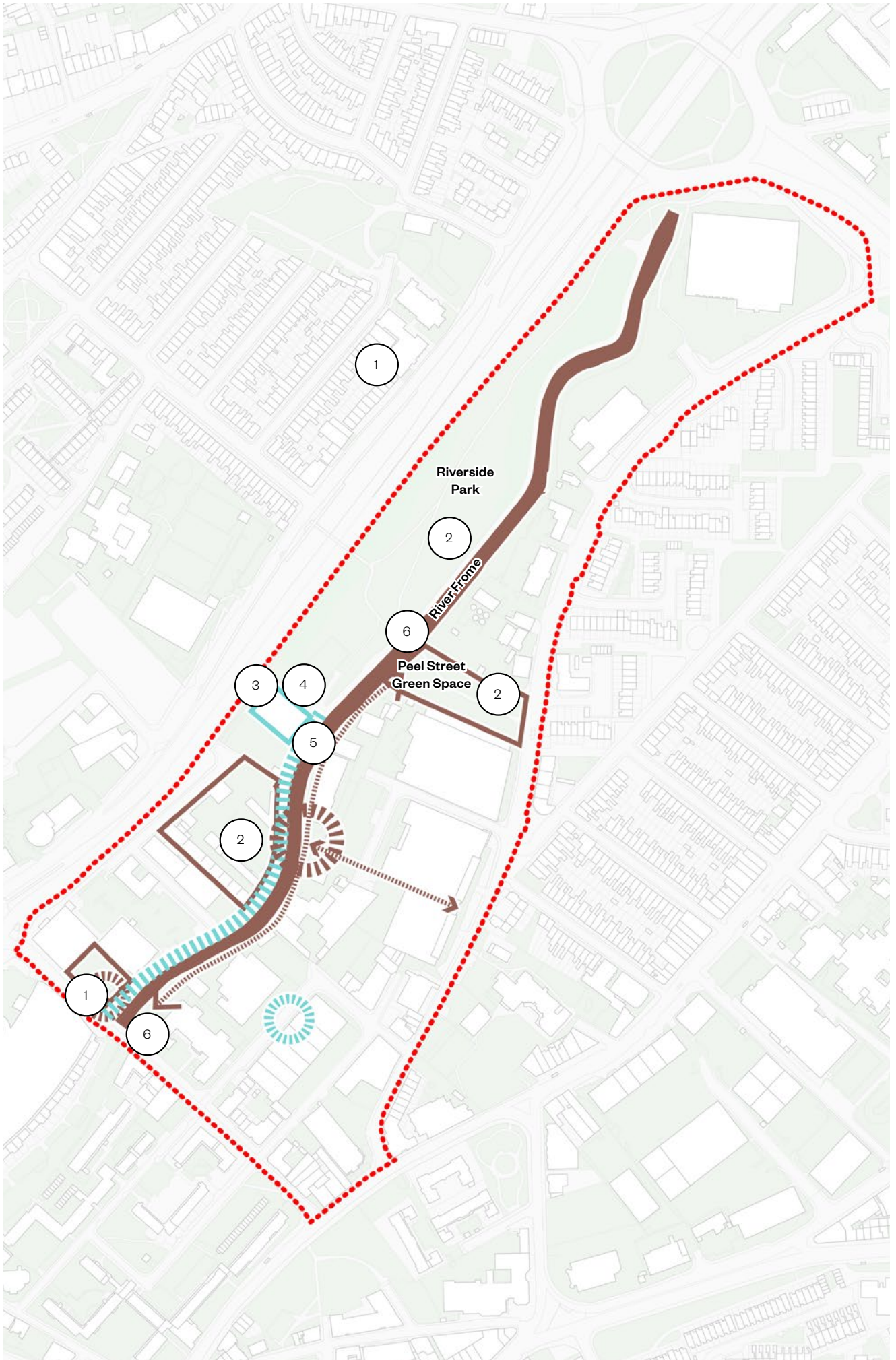
Identified opportunity areas



Frome Gateway boundary

**See the following pages for 'Snapshot' and 'Spotlight' information on the 'Small' sized projects.**

- 1 Billboard on corner of Houlton Street and Wellington Road
- 2 Food/recipes/growing project with communal feast outcome
- 3 Activation of Riverside Park
- 4 'Frome Gateway Games' focussing on sport/activity/young people
- 5 Riverside activation through artist-led walks and mapping
- 6 Co-designed community noticeboard and directory signage



# Menu of Ideas

## Medium Projects

**The map opposite presents a set of medium projects which have the potential to be delivered individually or as a cluster. The delivery of these projects could be funded by smaller grants or funding pots and led by a range of different stakeholders.**

### Key



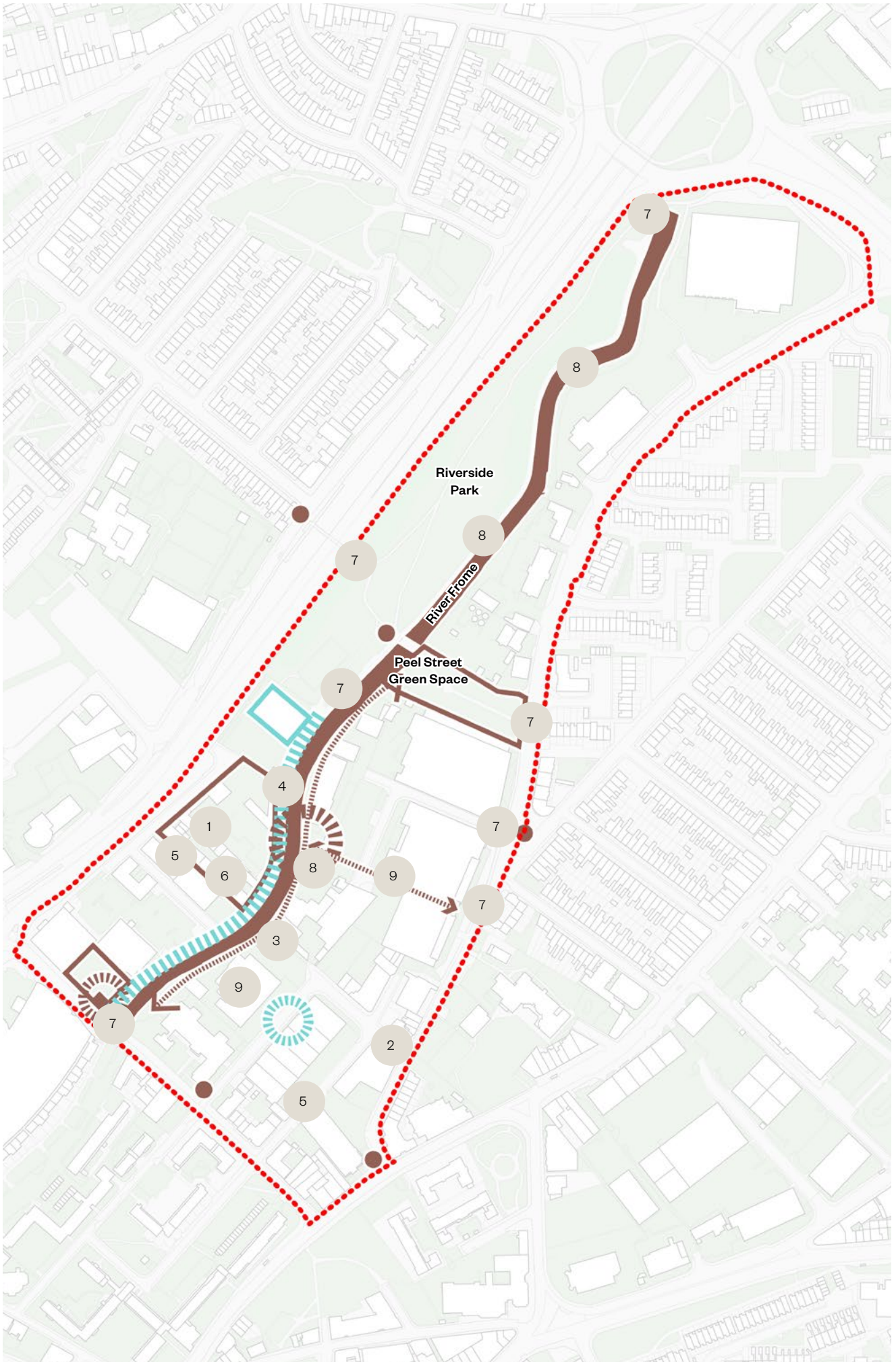
Identified opportunity areas



Frome Gateway boundary

**See the following pages for 'Snapshot' and 'Spotlight' information on the 'Medium' sized projects.**

- 1 Regular meanwhile programme of activities focussed on testing ways of working.
- 2 Radio show developing history and identity of Frome Gateway through community content
- 3 Meanwhile activation of Sawmills site as temporary 'urban commons'/public space ahead of new permanent public space
- 4 Closing Wellington Road for events
- 5 Events infrastructure, such as a circus tent
- 6 'Play on the way' spaces
- 7 Improving gateway points
- 8 Riverside viewing platforms and social space
- 9 Co-design of interior/exterior long-term community/cultural spaces



# Menu of Ideas

## Large Projects

**Bigger projects are an opportunity to be ambitious and to think at scale. Bringing different people together to bring long-term positive change to Frome Gateway**

### Key



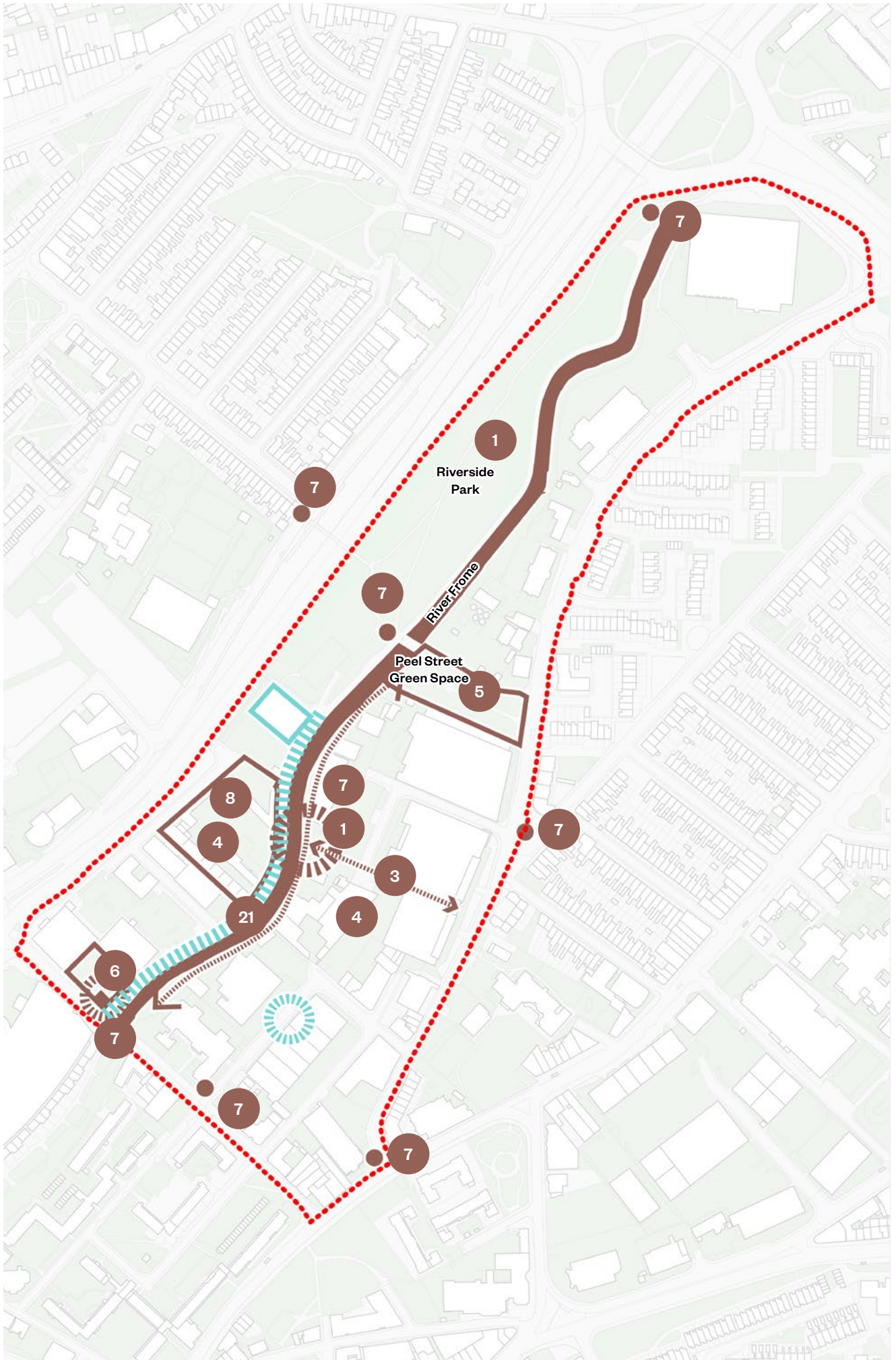
Identified opportunity areas



Frome Gateway boundary

**See the following pages for 'Snapshot' and 'Spotlight' information on the 'Large' sized projects.**

- 1 Riverside amenity spaces
- 2 New public spaces in Platform and Dandara developments
- 3 Makers Avenue and link to Riverside Park
- 4 Creation of artist-led creative workspace
- 5 Peel Street Green Space improvements
- 6 Corner kiosk/public facing use at Houlton Street site
- 7 Co-designed wayfinding throughout Frome Gateway
- 8 Materials circular re-use hub



# Making it Happen

- Delivering Projects
- Useful Contacts and Information



Community Launch, The Green Way, Bristol, 2020, Delivered by Design West, Image credit, Paul Blakemore

## Delivering Projects

### Alongside developments

**If you are a local organisation, community group, artist collective or other stakeholder, you may want to deliver your own public art projects and cultural activations and get involved in an area-wide approach.**

**Key considerations might be:**

- If you are within, or adjacent to, the City Centre or Frome Gateway areas, do any of the opportunities in this document resonate with you or cross over with your own values, expertise and plans for the future?
- Might your organisation be able to provide a developer with the resource (management and/or community participants) that they require to fulfil their own public art obligations?
- Does your organisation have a creative function? If so might you be able to assist a developer in delivering their public art and/or cultural activation plan? Could you act as their public art producer? Or as the artist or creative organisation that delivers or

- co-delivers a specific artwork or cultural activation project as listed in the opportunities?
- Or do you provide activity or represent a particular community or user group that a developer or strategic partner might wish to engage with in order to deliver one of the opportunities? As a future visitor, resident or business?

**Contact Bristol City Council's Regeneration Team or Art and the Public Realm Team and let them know you are interested – and what you can provide.**

**They will be able to add you to the mailing list for regular updates, and connect you to any relevant opportunities to get involved.**



Seeds of Change - A Floating Ballast Seed Garden, Bristol, 2012-17. Image credit, Max McClure #2

## **Delivering Projects**

Useful Contacts and  
information

**For more information about  
delivering Public Art and  
Cultural Activation projects in  
Frome Gateway and the City  
Centre, you can get in touch  
with Bristol City Council using  
the following contact details:**

[citycentreregeneration@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:citycentreregeneration@bristol.gov.uk)

[artandthepublicrealm@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:artandthepublicrealm@bristol.gov.uk)

[fromegateway@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:fromegateway@bristol.gov.uk)



Hollow, Katie Paterson with Zeller & Moye, Bristol, 2016. Image credit, Max McClure

# Glossary

## Public Art

The term 'Public Art' refers to art that is in the public realm, regardless of whether it is situated on public or private property or whether it has been paid for with public or private money. Please see section on typologies above for the different ways of interpreting public art.

## Public Art Plan

A Public Art Plan should always be written by a Public Art Producer/ Consultant. It lays out a developer approach to public art that meets Bristol City Council's definitions and principles, and the needs and opportunities of a specific scheme. Amendments and additions can be made/added to this document and signed off by the Public Art Officer as the scheme passes through the planning pathway. The public art programme should then be delivered against the details of the Public Art Plan.

## Culture

Culture means many different things to different people including music, art, history, heritage, events and experiences where Bristol's diverse citizens can share, celebrate or learn. Culture also relates to how we understand, explore and inhabit places and contributes to how the communities that live there thrive.

## Cultural Activation

Activity that contributes to the culture and conviviality of existing and new places. This might include events and happenings, as well as activating spaces for meeting and gathering. Often bringing people together, providing a sense of shared identity and belonging, and empowerment; encouraging participation in civic life. Cultural activation involves working with creative partners/cultural producers and/or artists and engages with local stakeholders and assets. It does not necessarily lead to a permanent outcome; it could be an experience, event or temporary intervention.

## Social Value

Social value is a way of understanding and measuring the benefit to society from the delivery of goods and services. It is an approach used to broaden thinking about 'value for money' beyond financial cost or price, by considering the value of social, economic and environmental benefits too.

## Cultural Strategy

A Cultural Strategy in a place shaping context takes a connected, cohesive approach across a defined physical area to ensure a strong and appropriate cultural life can be safeguarded and encouraged to grow to contribute to welcoming, distinctive and attractive places.

## Section 106

A legal agreement between an applicant seeking planning permission and the local planning authority, which is used to mitigate the impact of the development on the local community and infrastructure. Funds agreed through the S106 process are held by the council and ring-fenced for that specific purpose.

See more at [bristol.gov.uk/council/council-spending-and-performance/section-106-money](https://bristol.gov.uk/council/council-spending-and-performance/section-106-money)

## Planning Condition

Planning Conditions are attached to granted planning permissions, enabling development to proceed where it would otherwise have been necessary to refuse planning permission. Conditions can enhance the quality of development and enable development to proceed where it would otherwise have been necessary to refuse planning permission, by mitigating the adverse effects. The objectives of planning are best served when the power to attach conditions to a planning permission is exercised in a way that is clearly seen to be fair, reasonable and practicable. It is important to ensure that conditions are tailored to tackle specific problems, rather than standardised or used to impose broad unnecessary controls.

## **Resilient River Frome**

The Resilient Frome Project is looking at innovative ways to manage flood risk across the river Frome catchment. Bristol City Council is the lead partner with support from South Gloucestershire Council, Wessex Water and the Environment Agency. It stretches the length of the River Frome and for the purposes of this document involves projects within the Frome Gateway Regeneration Area.

## London

Unit 21 Tower Workshops  
58 Riley Road  
London SE1 3DG

+44 (0)20 7252 3400

## Manchester

Jactin House  
24 Hood Street  
Ancoats  
Manchester M4 6WX

+44 (0)161 9743206

[studio@wemadethat.co.uk](mailto:studio@wemadethat.co.uk)  
[wemadethat.co.uk](http://wemadethat.co.uk)

# We Made That

Working with:

**FIELD** | ART PROJECTS

36 Carnarvon Road  
Bristol  
BS6 7DS

[Info@fieldartprojects.com](mailto:Info@fieldartprojects.com)  
[www.fieldartprojects.com](http://www.fieldartprojects.com)



Homes  
England

We Made That LLP is registered  
in England and Wales.  
Reg no. OC367789